



MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: September 15, 2003

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Texas Prairie Wetland Project Receives 2002 Coastal America Spirit Award

WHAT: The Texas Prairie Wetland Project will be presented the **2002 Coastal America Spirit Award**. The Project worked to enhance wetland habitat to help increase waterfowl and other water bird populations.

WHO: **Receiving awards:** Natural Resources Conservation Service; US Fish & Wildlife Service; TX Parks and Wildlife Department; and Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Photo opportunities and interviews on site.

WHERE: In conjunction with Southeast Watershed Forum and Southern States Environmental Conference, Mississippi Coastal Coliseum and Convention Center, Biloxi, MS

WHEN: Tuesday, September 23, 2003

BACKGROUND: The Coastal America Partnership created the awards program in 1997 in an effort to recognize outstanding efforts to protect, preserve and restore coastal resources. The Coastal America Spirit Award recognizes teams whose efforts demonstrate the Coastal America spirit of teamwork and are poised to address our challenging coastal issues but have not yet matured or are limited in scope.

In 1991, a Cooperative Agreement among team members created the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project (TPWP). The TPWP covers a 28 county area along the Texas Gulf Coast, which is a historic waterfowl migration and wintering area. Privately owned lands are targeted for the purpose of cooperatively managing, creating, developing, restoring, or enhancing wetland habitat so as to maintain an increase in waterfowl and other water bird populations. The landowners share in the cost and make a commitment to maintain the wetland and, in most cases, to guarantee water during fall and winter each year. Several schools have enhanced small wetlands on campus as environmental learning centers under this program. The Formosa Petrochemical Plant constructed an educational wetland of approximately 250 acres, which is used by the public for educational purposes. This is only one of several industrial cooperators who have constructed wetlands for educational purposes through this program. Of particular importance is the wetlands enhancement and restoration assistance provided on 400,000 acres held by 600 landowners and the creation of wetlands for the Houston Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy and the Katy Prairie Conservancy.

TEAM MEMBERS:

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Richard Bettge
Kimberly Grafe
Eddie Garcia
Gary Valentine

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

David Curtis
Greg Esslinger

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD)

David Lobpries
David Mabie

Ducks Unlimited (DU)

Brandon Wieme
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